12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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House-types of the Banyakyusa

By Agnete Biegaard

During a stay in the Southern Highlands in Tanganyika in 1955, I was given the opportunity to inspect—and draw plans of—some of the houses belonging to the local Bantu tribe of the Nyakyusa. In literature they are known also under the name of Konde.

The district in which they live is fairly high above sea level and near the borders of Rhodesia and Nyasaland; the rainfall is fully adequate. Banana and coffee are doing well—the banana trees often forming groves in between which you catch a glimpse of the village houses.

The district invites comparison with other localities in Tanganyika where the country is high, and where precipitation is plentiful. Such localities would be the districts around Kilimanjaro and near Bukoba to the west of Lake Victoria. In the former live the Chagga tribe, in the latter the tribe of the Haya. Even here banana and coffee are plenty—and the I.Q. of both tribes is said to be high, as is the case of the Banyakyusa (plural of Nyakyusa).

Maybe you might therefore expect to find a corresponding standard of dwelling-houses, perhaps even the same type of hut. But in this matter you will be highly surprised; so great are the differences between the three areas. Apart from the original design of the house being round and the roof thatched, no similarity exists between the various houses or their interior lay-outs.

The round, thatched Chagga hut has its roof all way down to the ground. It is not very large and the interior lay-out is quite primitive. A cow or goat lives all its life indoors and is fed there. A short and uncomfortable bed is found near by. Down the centre of the floor is a stone-paved aisle. Everything looks quite simple—especially when you remember that in other aspects the Chagga are quite advanced in their use of modern facilities; for instance they use electricity for the grinding of their maize.

The Haya hut—the old, round type—is a really magnificent thing. I think its centre is seven or eight metres high. In front it has a kind of overhang, maybe you might call it a front room, where people will sit, and where guests will be received. If you are a welcome guest, a straw mat will be rolled out to cover the grass flooring of the hut. The walls of the front room are solid plates made from a kind of reed. The hearth is placed near the centre of the inner room.

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H 342 As indicated above, the floor is covered with grass. Various domestic utensils may be seen, stuck into thin screens of plant material.

H 342 178 But this old, beautiful type of hut is very much on the decline. It is costly to make and to keep in repair, and the thick straw *roof is*, admittedly, highly inflammable. A flying trip round Lake Victoria clearly shows how the straw roofs in the banana groves are being replaced by corrugated iron. This change may even have another reason, viz. the fact that fodder for cattle is in short supply and that the grass for roofs is hard to come by. No doubt, it is a question of time when the fine old Haya hut will have disappeared.

N 114 In the Southern Highlands, where I was given the opportunity to stay for three months at various Danish mission stations, I visited the village round the Rungwe mission, the neighbouring villages of Ilolo and Kikota, and some villages near the Rutenganio mission station. I made a trip to Lake Nyasa and another to the Poroto mountains. I must admit to a limited knowledge of drawing technique and of house construction, but I have measured a number of houses and sketched their plan and also the furnishings I found in them. The positioning of the various objects has been established.

N 361 [342 356] The high standard of dwellings of the Banyakyusa is truly to be wondered at. The houses, clustered in villages, often along a winding street, lie intermingled with banana and coffee bushes. The houses are large and their interior is clean. Often two or three houses belong to one family, and, if so, will be grouped round a courtyard.

N 342 [824] Even if you could find houses built from sun-dried bricks and fired tiles, most were from bamboo with a grass roofing.

All houses stand on a clay base which, though not very high, no doubt means some protection against penetration of ground moisture during the heavy rains of April–June.

N [824] Besides bamboo, sometimes the lade of tree fern, *makoko*, is used in outer walls. Such tree fern stems have not the carrying capacity of bamboo, but they are far more resistant to rot. Among the other common features of the existing types of houses, should be mentioned the mud cloth, the size of cells that from the inside are pressed between the vertical bamboo poles; also, the inner wall is roughcast with a mixture of mud and cow manure; the floor is from tamped clay. In some places you find very fine floors in which a pattern has been rolled into the wet clay; to this end a short length of the stem of the banana cluster has been employed, viz. the length between the seats of the male and the female flowers. Also employed are another plant stem, or an empty corn cob.

N 354 515 In all houses where women live, there are one or more hearths. The presence of two hearths in one house usually means that the husband has two wives, each with having her own hearth, either in the common house or in a house of her own.

N 342 The houses always have a kind of ceiling made from bamboo sticks and curved

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by horizontal bamboo joists, at right angles to the principal beams of the ceiling. This ceiling never covers the entire room, but only the greater part, and always the part directly above the hearth. Up here firewood is placed to dry. A fine black basket is hung from the ceiling above the fire. Access to the loft is by means of a ladder. 342 [372]

When you read reports by the 'first' Europeans on these peoples and their houses, they always refer to a round house with reclining walls and a conical roof. Merensky (1894) mentions and illustrates such a house (pages 141 et seq.). Fülleborn (1906) mentions and illustrates several houses (Text Volume pages 376 et seq., and Atlas, plates 64-67). The inner surface of the walls of the house was decorated with patterns impressed into the mud layer which covers the bamboo poles. The three stones that form the hearth are shown, and also the bed behind a low permanent partition wall. These were exceptionally fine houses with beautiful, decorated and painted doors. The entrance had relief ornaments, often of coloured clay. Fülleborn notes that the mud houses are the dwellings of married people. [382]

There is no doubt that the round house is the original type of dwelling. In 1955, I saw no round houses like the ones described by the above scholars, but I know that formerly they were often seen, at least as late as 1932. Professor Monica Wilson of Cape Town has told me that she saw them everywhere in 1932, but that during a visit to the district in 1955 she found only one single house of this type, in the village of Masoko. 178 342

At the time of my visit, round houses could be seen, but not the type having walls inclining inwards near the ground, and they were not by far as imposing as the houses mentioned above; and there were not many of them. I had the opportunity to make drawings of three houses, all occupied by old people. 342

The round house is called an *isinga*. In one of these *isinga* there lived an old man whose wife, Malia, lived across the courtyard in a rectangular hut of the old Nyakyusa type (see infra). The husband's house was 6.5 metres across, and was divided in halves by a fence made from sticks. One half was where the man lived; it had one bed for him, and one for his grandchildren, who would come to visit him, now and then. Near the wall were two iron chests; also, a board had been hung at the wall as a rest for the chickens. A hen's nest, a small wicker basket, was placed about 3 ft. above the floor in the furcation of a four or five-pronged stick. These hen's nests are seen in all houses. The ceiling was supported by seven upright posts, seemingly placed entirely at random. The under side of the roof was strengthened by eight circular-running fascines of bamboo. In the centre, a heavy log (not bamboo) reached up to the pointed top of the roof. [543] [353] [352] [231]

The other half of the house was reserved for the cattle, three cows and two calves; there were five posts to which the cattle were tied at night. [233]

The house had an entry door at each end, but there was no passage from the man's half to that of the cattle.

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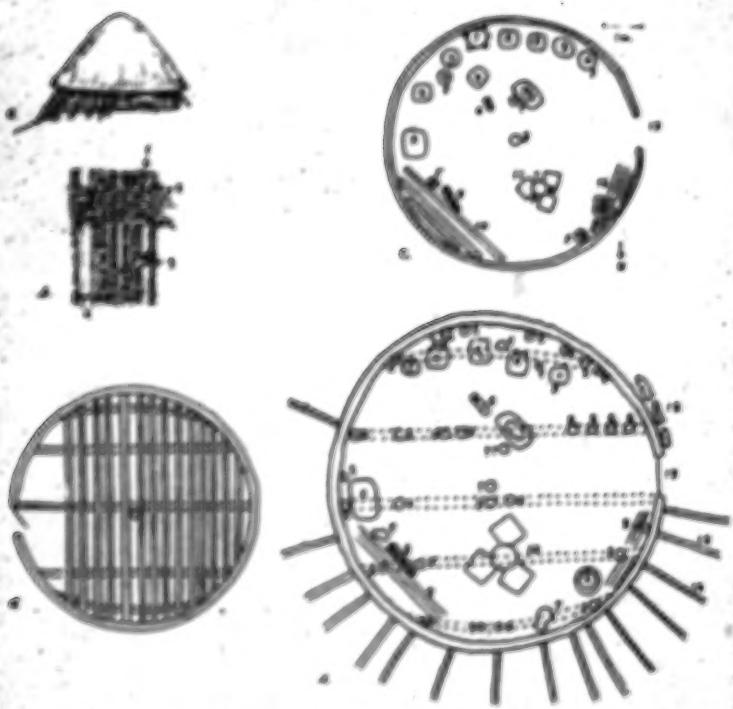

Iringa. Mshoka's house at Ilolo near the Ruaguvu mission station.

a. Elevation showing buttressing posts; to the right of the door is material for thatching.—b. Detail of wall. 1, cow's horn; 2, bark fibre for winding round poles; 3, notch made in bamboo pole that was crushed; 4, bamboo.—c. Plan of house showing furnishings and utensils on the floor, but not the sticks that were lying everywhere (see plate c). 1, hen's nest; 2, basket; 3, jar; 4, newly made basket; 5, calabash; 6, broom; 7, mill-stone and grinder; 8, centre post (there were a couple of bananas for food); 9, sleeping mat; 10, small under-ceiling from sticks tied together, for small things; 11, hearth; 12, heap of mkiu, a kind of grass which looks much like thin bamboo.—d. Cross-section at ceiling level showing centre post, beams, and joists on which the sticks are placed; the centre post reaches right up to the top of the roof.—e. Plan of house showing beams of the ceiling (dotted lines, cf. d). 1, centre post; 2, other beam-carrying posts; 3, hen's nest; 4, basket; 5, calabash; 6, broom; 7, calabash; 8, sleeping mat; 9, small under-ceiling, repository for small things; 10, hearth from three stones; 11, mill-stone and small grinder; 12, thatching material; 13, door; 14, outside buttresses.

342. The round house was standing on somewhat higher ground than the surrounding bananas; half the house was buttressed by wooden posts, possibly because the ground was a bit lower there. The walls were from bamboo poles,

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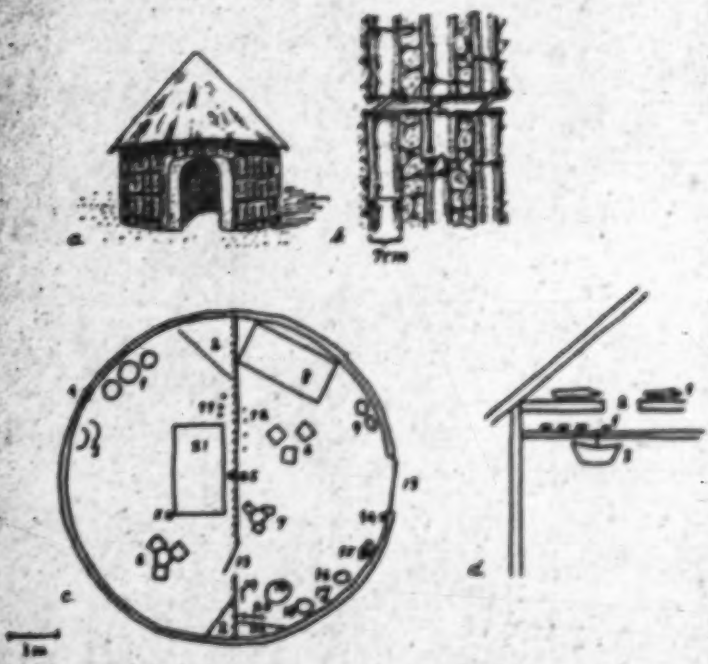

Isinga. Tafweme's house at Rungwe, Sept. 1955.

a. Elevation, showing doorway with walls drawn too thick; the door itself has been left out.—b. Outside detail of wall showing split cross-bamboos; red clay cobs between poles.—c. Plan. 1, jars; 2, shelves; 3, shields etc. (an shields is a flat basket used as a plate); 4, small window; 5, centre post; 6, hearth; 7, water jar; 8, spare bed; 9, banana fibres; 10, hen's nest; 11, sticks; 12, sticks for kitchen utensils; 13, door; 14, post for locking device; 15, stone grinding trough; 16, basket with bananas; 17, pestle; 18, *kimi*; 19, *shyampa*, mat for collecting flour from grinding stone; 20, bamboo ladder; 21, bed of the woman; 22, roost.—d. Cross-section of bamboo ceiling, with firewood for drying, and a fire basket below.

connected near the ground with tree fern stems which easily fitted into the hollow of the bamboo. Between these tree fern stems, the liquid manure from the cow-house could escape—much to the benefit of the nearby bananas.

The other *isinga* belonged to the old widow, Tafweme. She lived alone in her house. The walls were bamboo, up to 7 cm in diameter. From the inside, the space between the poles had been filled with 3–5 cm large cobs of red clay. Round the outside were four horizontal bands of split bamboo.

This house, too, was 6.5 metres in diameter, and it was divided into two equal [353]

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342 353 parts. The partition wall was bamboo and mud. A doorway gave on to the inner part, where Tufweme had her bed.

354 There were two hearths, one in each room. The front one was not used. In the outer room was a bed for guests—a common feature of all houses. Tufweme was thought to be well off, and she had plenty of carrying rings, used by the 482 women when they carry loads, often very heavy, on their heads. The inner room was used for stores, including a number of earthen jars. She had these very fine, 352 low stools. I saw them outside in the sun, but their usual place was no doubt in the outer room, which had the character of a workroom. Here were the large 412 wooden mortar and its long pestle; also the grinding stone and in a corner the small mat, the akyanya, which is used to take up the newly ground flour. There 417 was also the ladder, used for fetching down firewood from the loft; you could see 415 the hen's nest, and the large water jar with its pointed bottom placed on three stones.

415 The third *isinga* belonged to an eighty-year-old woman whose husband had 769 died. She told me how every day she would fill a fine, decorated bamboo mug 53 with milk for him! These mugs, seen in all the houses, mostly have geometrical

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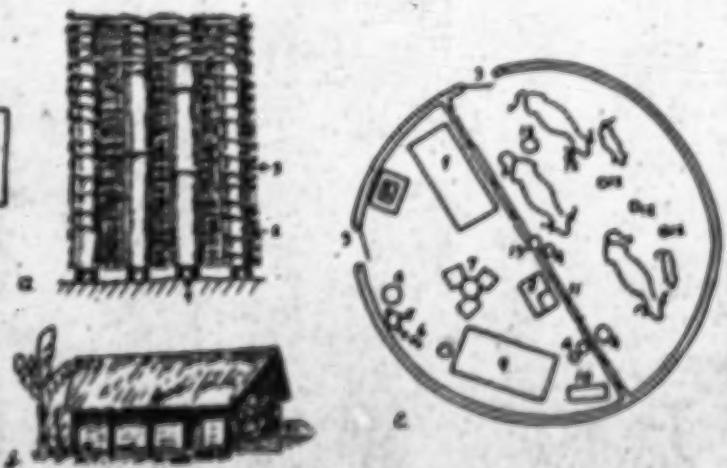

Houses belonging to Mulla Ulinyakwa and her husband.

a. Detail of *isinga*, outer wall. 1, two bars sewn jointed to bamboo pole—main apparatus for hanging mosquito; 2, bamboo pole with plaited bars windings; 3, split bamboo.—b, Mulla's *isinga*.—c. Plan of *isinga*. 1, bed of the room; 2, iron chairs for guests; 3, door; 4, posts supporting ceiling; 5, hen's nest; 6, bars used inside for the mosquito curtain; 7, hearths; 8, chests; 9, bed of the grandchildren; 10, roost from hollowed out trunk; 11, bow garments; 12, posts for drying canoe; 13, entrance post in gap of mud.

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patterns burned into the bamboo; they are hung upside down so the dust will not settle in them. The bonjom is the natural partition of the bamboo cane.

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The house was standing on high, slightly slanting ground, and like the first mentioned house it was buttressed by a great number of thick branches. Incidentally, it seemed to be very old and rickety. Inside, there were a great many posts supporting the horizontal bamboo ceiling and the stores of firewood. All posts were bifurcated and held the beams solidly in place. The diameter of the house was the usual 6.5 meters, but in this case there was no inner partition. As this woman was very poor, she had no bed, but slept on a mat on the floor. Only very rarely is there no bed in the houses; I remember having seen this only three times.

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The hearth was the usual type: three decorated square stones, rising to a height of 30 cm above the floor, but being sunk 30 cm into the ground. Here they were positioned on one side, to ensure that the centre post would not catch fire, and to make for easy escape of the smoke through the doorway. None of the houses have other means of smoke outlet.

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Alongside the wall were calabashes, jars, and baskets; material for the baskets; and a little away from the wall, the large mill-stone and its appurtenant smaller grinding stone. A hen's nest was not missing either. Along one side was fitted a small under-ceiling for the storage of small things. Two or three bananas, meant to be her next meal, were lying on the floor near one of the posts. From the loft she reached down a calabash in which she had been carrying her child. Its inside was of a reddish colour.

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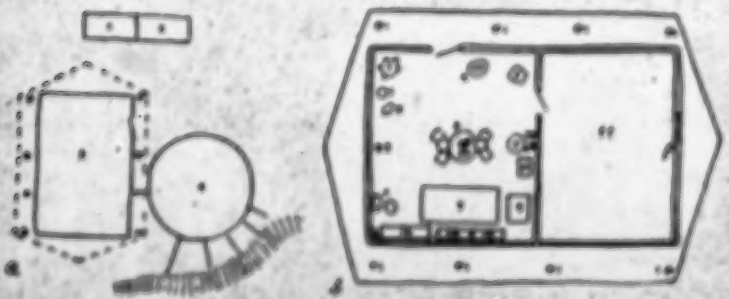

a. Site plan of Mzaka Ulinyakaya's houses. 1, house-cage; 2, drying-racks for crops; 3, Mzaka's dikhaga with roof supports along sides; 4, kraals belonging to Mzaka's husband, with buttresses or low ground.—b. Plan of Mzaka's dikhaga (barred window in back room). 1, hen's nest; 2, dikala (stool); 3, posts (those going up to ridge of roof are filled in); 4, large basket; 5, basket; 6, clay base round twin posts; 7, Mzaka's bed; 8, chest; 9, wooden chest; 10, table; 11, back room, having bamboo ceiling carried by bamboo cross beam (between posts marked 3); the room is used for storing clothes, etc.; 12, shelves.

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342 Another old woman lived in a neighbouring *ilenga* close by—if possible even more sparsely furnished than the last mentioned.

Common features of the round houses were: their size, the wooden centre-post, the ceiling covering the greater part of the room, the supporting posts for the beams that carry the bamboo joists and the ceiling proper; the building materials bamboo and mud; and the positioning of the hearth slightly off centre.

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The two hearths of Mpita's house. A clay bank surrounds the twin posts, then serves to fireproof them. Two hearthstones at either side form the hearths, the clay bank acting as the third 'stone'.

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342 The differences between this *ilenga* and the original round-type house are: the angle of the wall, here vertical (as opposed to the inclination of the wall of the original house); the entrance (here without ornaments); the door itself also without ornaments; and further the fact that the clay cobs placed between the bamboo poles were here not the shape but only the size of rolls. The pictures presented by Fülleborn clearly show the carefully formed clay balls in the wall.

[531] As distinct from the old-type house, this new type of house has no decorations on the inside of the wall, but in some instances decorations are found on the floor.

342 *Another type of house*, again, was rectangular, often very long, with a ridge-beam roof. In most cases, these houses were buttressed along both sides, and were thus provided with what you might call two verandahs. Sometimes also the gables of the houses had buttresses. The roof projected over the gables, most over the ridge. The roof sagged in the middle, a fact that was already observed by the scholars mentioned. This may be because the ridge-beam is not dry but freshly cut, when it is mounted in its place. During the subsequent drying process under load it will then be brought to sag—as we know from other types of houses.

This house is called an *ilenga* and is known to be typical of the Banyakyusa down olden times. Literally, *ilenga* means stable or cowhouse, thus presumably indicating its original purpose. There is a full description of this house in Fülle-

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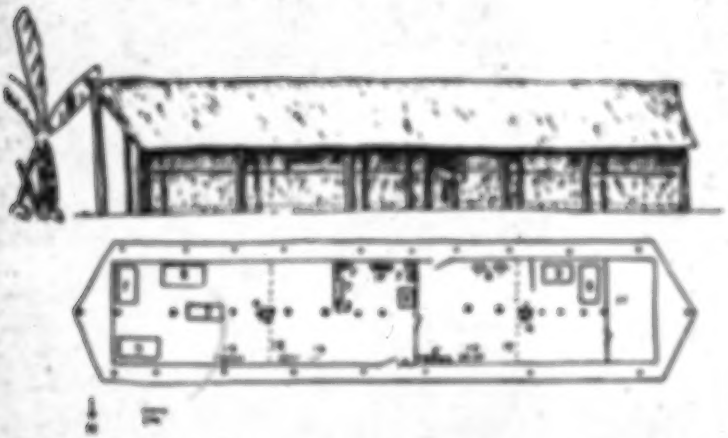

An ilikaya in the village of Kiwandela, the district of Rungwale, belonging to a man with two wives. The rooms have bamboo ceilings from dotted lines to ridge-pole. Posts reaching to ridge of roof are filled in. 1, husband's bed; 2, wife's bed; 3, child's bed; 4, hearth; 5, bow' seats; 6, water jar; 7, mat; 8, ladder; 9, table; 10, stools; 11, store-room; 12, dotted lines show limitation of ceiling; 13, small objects; 14, working material; 15, sleeping mat.

born. On page 353, he reports how the boys, when 7 or 10 years old, will leave their parents' house to live in long, rectangular cowhouse-like houses big or small, in a special youngsters' quarter at the far end of the village. On page 358 he writes: In many cases you do not know for certain whether you are dealing with a youngsters' house or a cowhouse—for the cattle may well be kept in these houses—or the herdsmen may sleep in the cowhouses. However, this mainly holds true of the low-lying Konde country, while on the other hand, in the high country, the cattle is usually kept in the dwelling houses. On pages 371 and 372, he relates how the cattle is tied to posts at night, and he shows a picture of a cowhouse.

He also refers (on page 356) to the use of the rectangular house for married men besides the boys. The difference is seen in the fact that these houses are not roughcast with mud, as this work is the province of women. Finally, he reports that, during the last few years of his stay in the Konde country, he saw Konde houses being built under increasing influence of the coastal culture, in imitation of the Swahili houses. They were roughcast with mud inside and out, and had a verandah supported by posts.

In 1955, many dialogue could be seen. Some were for the cattle, but most were dwelling houses for married people. Boys aged 7–10 and upwards until the marriageable age lived in cowhouse boys' houses, the material of which was new bamboos, but a thinner grass, resembling bamboo very much. These houses stood

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342 solitary or in a row some distance from the other houses of the village. They were never roughcast with mud).

Nearly all the *ilabaga* had a post-supported verandah. I measured up and drew sketches of two houses of this type, one belonging to the above-mentioned woman called Malia, whose husband lived next door in an *isinga*. She was a Christian—actually a church-elder. On the outside of her bamboo-framed, mud-roughcast wall, she had drawn a church in yellow, red, and black colours, and below she had written the word *kanisa* (church). Apart from a house near Lake Nyasa, of which I took a photograph and which had very modernistic and drastic drawings on its outside wall (crocodiles, a man and his bicycle, a man with his firearm), it is the only instance in which I saw any kind of coloured decoration on a house. Besides impressed patterns in clay on hearth and floor, I saw no decorations on the inside or outside of houses, except fine patterns in the outside wickerwork of the wall.

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342 In this house, approximately 8 metres long, there were two vertical supporting posts, reaching to the very ridge of the roof, where presumably they were joined to the ridge beam. However, the beam could not be seen.

354 The hearth was peculiar in that it consisted of two pairs of hearthstones near a clay base that surrounded a supporting post and a shorter post. Thus two hearths were available, at the same time serving as fire-proofing to the posts. Though Malia was a single woman, the house had two hearths. You might think that she had seen a stove and had found that two cooking places would be useful. I saw this arrangement in one more place, in the house of a widow, who—by the way—was also a Christian.

353 A space nearly half the size of the house was partitioned off, the half-wall having a doorway. This room was for stores only, clothes etc.; it had a barred window. Besides the hearths, the living-room had hen's nests, stools, baskets, [362] Malia's bed (2 m by 1 m), table, wooden shelves, boxes, and a chest. These last- [097] mentioned objects she had had no difficulty in obtaining from the neighbouring joiner's workshop belonging to the mission.

342 The other *ilabaga* is from quite a different district, that of Rutenganio. It was a very long house, as often seen in this locality, 26 metres long. I was told that

The type of house called *ilaba*, or *isiwa*.

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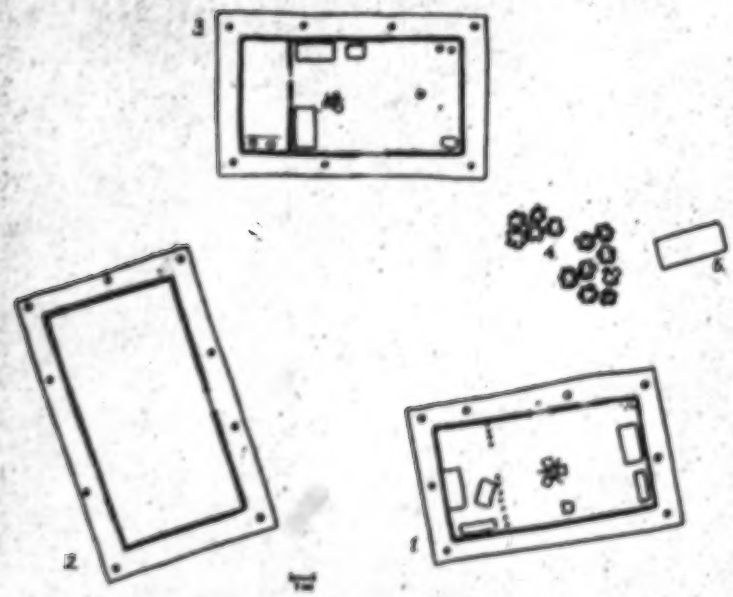

Three houses belonging to one family, situated round a common courtyard; the doors open on to the yard. The village street is along the back of the house at top. 1, Ierlina's house; 2, Baba's house; 3, Idina's house; 4, banana plants; 5, hen-coop.

houses existed which were 60 metres in length. It had the same width as Malia's house, approximately 5 metres. The roof was supported by posts along the sides and at the gables.

Two women lived in this house, both married to the same man. Consequently, there were two hearths, the stones of which were cylindrical-conical, broadening slightly at the top. All were decorated. Each woman had her part of the house, both with an outer door, and further there was a door, slightly narrower, between the two parts, and a fourth door to a store-room. No less than twelve posts supported the roof, all reaching to the ridge. The two parts were a bit unequal in size; nearly half of each had the well-known loft for firewood, etc. One part contained beds for the woman and her husband (one bed had 100 straw mats). The children had two beds. The husband had still another house, a short distance away at the foot of a hill, they said. I did not see it. The other woman's room held her bed and a cot.

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The hearths of both rooms were placed in the centre, between two upright posts. Utensils and furnishings did not differ much from the usual: hen's nests,

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two water jars, baskets, stools, a ladder leading to the loft, and a table. The rooms were large and spacious, 5 m by 14 m, and in two places low partitions were used to effect a sub-division of the rooms. One may well wonder at the great length of these houses, but probably it is quite true what is said, that, when—in 1891—the Germans took charge of the region and imposed a tax on houses, the Nyakyusa men made their women move in under their own roofs—only at the same time extending the houses, using the technique they already knew from the cowhouses.

Fülleborn reports on this payment of taxes, and finds it reasonable enough, because, he says, "it fosters in the people an understanding of work and discipline," and of the house tax he says, "it works to abolish polygamy, since every woman, following the traditions of her country, has her own house, for which her husband must pay the tax."

But the Banyakyusa seems to have adapted themselves to the new law and have moved their wives to the very long houses, thus escaping part of the taxes...

The third type of house was a rectangular house with a hipped roof. This type is called *ilumu*, which means tent. It was also called *itoro*, the meaning of which I have not been able to ascertain; maybe it means chicken-breast, to which it bears much likeness.

This is the modern house-type to which Fülleborn may be referring when he talks about rectangular houses, "- - the very rare instances when a hipped roof is seen - -." (page 379).

According to statements made by people who have lived in the district for a third of a century, this type of house is thought to have come from the south some 30 years ago. I have not visited the Ngonde who live farther south, but Sir Harry Johnston (1897) depicts a group of people called "Wankonde (North Nyasa)" in front of a house which looks very much like the modern *ilumu* of the Banyakyusa. It seems therefore reasonable to assume that the roof-construction design of the Ngonde has now reached the district of the Banyakyusa. Johnston also informs us that the rectangular type is not actually the original type in East Africa, but that it was probably introduced by the Arabs.

This *ilumu* or *itoro* is shorter than the long *ilibaga*; seldom more than 11 metres in length. But its interior design does not differ. For instance, this holds true of the placing of the hearth, of the equal distance between posts supporting the roof, of the bamboo ceiling covering about half the room, of half-partitions from bamboo and in some cases mud, of store-rooms in the far end of the house, accessible through an inner door.

In an *ilumu* I have never seen more than one hearth, which means that the house is inhabited by one woman. A house in the village of Kihota presented an example of the peculiar tradition of the peoples of the Highlands, viz. the tying of the cattle to posts in the dwelling-houses. My drawings are all from the Highlands, where, in the *ilibaga*, as also noted by Fülleborn, the same tradition is

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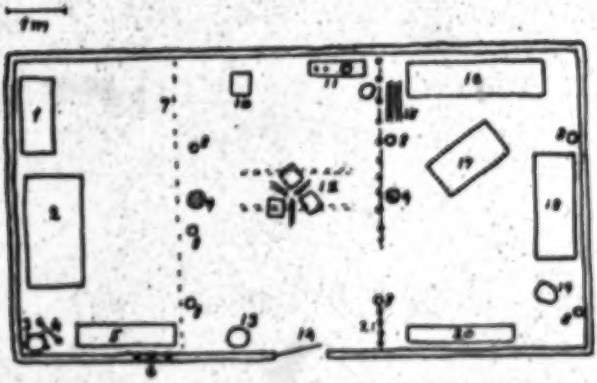

Inelina's house. 1, cupboard with shelves; 2, children's bed; 3, hen's nest; 4, ladder; 5, roost; 6, barred window; 7, from dotted line towards the right is the bamboo ceiling; 8, from here issue 5 horizontal bamboo sticks on which the bamboo ceiling is supported; 9, Posts supporting roof; 10, chair; 11, low shelf with two bamboo jars and a water jar; 12, hearth with three hearthstones and sticks under ceiling for carrying the fine basket, and corn-cobs hung up to dry, etc.; 13, beer jar; 14, door; 15, mats behind the low partition; 16, shelf for domestic utensils; 17, child's bed; 18, Inelina's bed; 19, baskets; 20, domestic utensils; 21, low partition between rooms.

found. In the front part of the Kikola house, serving as an entrance room, were four posts called *ifilingi*, to which two cows were tied at night.

This part, which we may call the cowhouse, also housed hen's nests, the roost, [231] and the mortar to be used for maize, etc.

The hearth, consisting of one square and two round hearthstones, was placed [354] in the centre of the living-room part. Here were also water jars and the woman's bed. This means that, even if this type of house had a roof of a different shape and was always provided with a verandah with posts supporting its roof, the [542] interior was really designed on the same lines as the short *ifilinga*, but it was meant to house only one woman, or one man, as we shall see below.

We may imagine that one of the reasons why the type of roof was changed, 342 was the weakness of the pointed roof of the *ifilinga*. It could often be seen to have 178 a tendency to fall in, and had to be supported by a post. Even in Fülleborn's illustrations, e.g. plate 64 c, a kind of reinforcement can be seen at the edge of the roof. No doubt the roof of the *ilumo* does not suffer to the same extent from this flaw.

New houses were being built to this design, and I suppose that a little more 342 than half the number of the houses were of the *ifilinga* type, and a little than half the *ilumo*.

In the village of Ilolo, I surveyed three houses belonging to one family, a [361]

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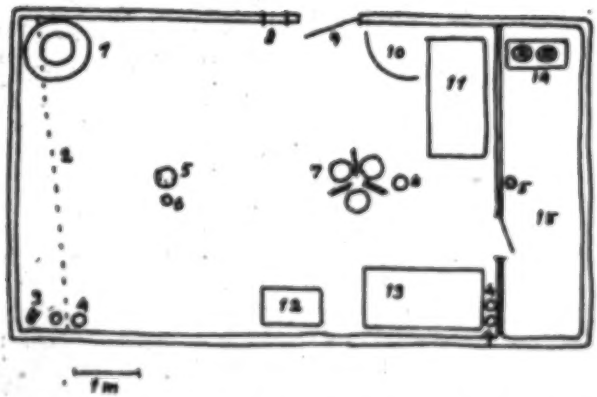

Idina's house. 1, basket; 2, clothes-line; 3, broom; 4, jars, in the back room on low shelf; 5, posts supporting roof; 6, small dimension bamboo poles, supports for the ceiling; 7, hearth with three round hearthstones; 8, shuttered opening through which the bolt may be reached; 9, door; 10, canava for food; 11, spare bed; 12, table; 13, Idina's bed; 14, shelf for jars; 15, store-room behind mud wall with door.

[361] man and his two wives. The houses were grouped round a common courtyard, the doors giving upon this space and not on the nearby village thoroughfare.

The three houses bore the names of Iseliha's house, Idina's house, and Baba's house. The elder wife, Iselina, had several minor children, who slept either near
352 her own bed or in the living area. She owned furnishings as modern as a chair
177 and a cupboard with shelves, besides the usual objects in these houses, baskets, bamboo mugs, hen's nest and roost, ladder and water jars. She also had an earthen-
[415 ware beer jar which, one day when I called on her, was standing on the fire,
293] nearly making the froth boil over. She was preparing beer for her husband's *friends, who had just dropped in.*

352 The new wife, Idina, had a store-room in her house, and there was also a
[353 large heap of cassava, meant for food. As often seen in these houses, she had also
262] a guest bed. She had a number of jars and baskets, but no hen's nest. Straight across the room she had suspended a line on which she put her clothes. Such an
[246] arrangement was often used, especially by the bachelors; they had a line for their shirts. Clothes-hangers were not in use. You just threw your clothes across the line. A wardrobe was never seen.

342 The interior of Baba's house presented a peculiar picture. It was divided into
352 three rooms, a living-area in the middle; at one side the bed-room, at the other a store-room. The bed-room had only one bed and a wooden chest. There was no hearth in the living-room—for the husband had his meals prepared by one of his wives. But there was a true accumulation of tables, chairs, suitcases, and a

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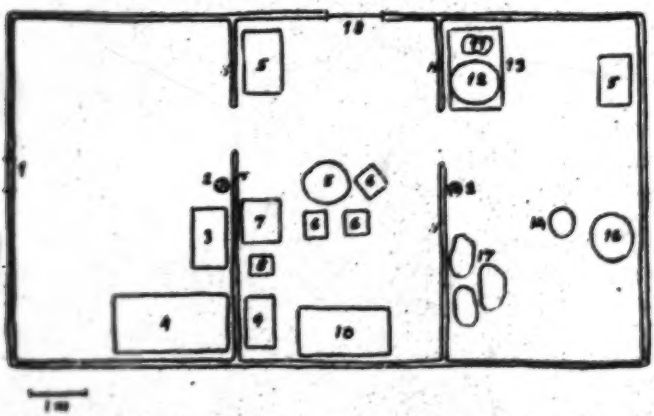

Baba's house. 1, barred window; 2, posts supporting roof; 3, wooden chest; 4, Baba's bed; 5, table; 6, chair; 7, cupboard; 8, chair with three suitcases; 9, suitcase; 10, table with bookshelf; 11, bag; 12, large basket, *ikitoke*; 13, low stand for 11 and 12; 14, millet jars; 15, low partitions; 16, *ikitoke* in which the millet is washed; 17, rice in bags.

cupboard. This seemed very strange and a bit disorderly. On a chair were three suitcases on top of each other.

It was interesting to see, in the store-room, the very crops that belong to the man, viz. rice and millet, the most valuable produce. The rice was in bags, and it is quite probable that this man had bought it from the districts near Lake Nyasa, where it thrives well. On higher ground, rice cannot be cultivated.

The millet was contained in a basket, 1 m in height, 55 cm broad at the bottom, and narrower, 35 cm, at the top.

Further, there was a large, beautiful earthenware jar, which he had bought. This was intended for the millet. And there was also a cylindrical container for the washing of the millet when it was brought home from the field. This vessel was 55 cm in height and 85 cm across.

All three houses had a small window with bars or shutters.

The inside of the houses lay in semi-darkness, as the only light is admitted through the doorway, and in some cases through the diminutive barred window. Nevertheless, the interiors give a nice impression, because of their tidiness, height, size, and cleanness. And how cosy they are, when seen at night; the door is closed, you gather round the fire and delight in perfectly cooked rice, which is the favourite dish at this principal meal of the day.

Johnston says (1897, page 433) that the greater number of the houses are circular in their plan and very much like bee-hives in shape; their walls are wickerwork filled with mud cobs, and they have thatched roofs. He also reports

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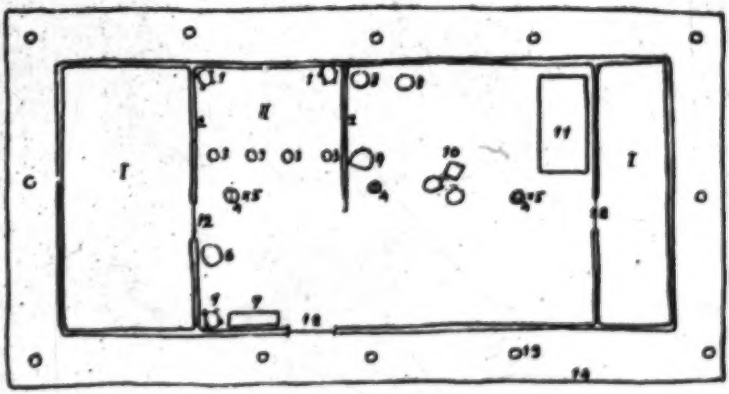

An *ikaya* from the village of Kikota. I, store-rooms at either end of the house; II, corner for cattle.—1, hen's nest; 2, low partitions from bamboo; 3, posts for tying two head of cattle; 4, Three posts supporting roof; 5, here bamboo cups, calabashes, etc. were hanging on the posts; 6, wooden mortar for maize; 7, roost from bamboo tied together; 8, water jar; 9, basket; 10, hearth consisting of two round and one square hearthstone; 11, bed of the woman; 12, door; 13, supports for the roof; 14, eaves.—Outer doors from wooden boards; store-room doors from bamboo; bamboo ceiling covers area from half-way partition to the right of cow's corner on to store-room inner wall to the right.

[171] that such houses are found in Africa (a) south of the Zambezi, (b) in all of British Central Africa, (c) in all of East Africa including the Egyptian Sudan,—but not in localities where the Arab influence has introduced the oblong, rectangular building.

342 1971 Now, if we look upon the eastern territories of Africa only—what great changes have taken place there since Johnston's day? The round house is being ousted under foreign influence—Arab as well as European.

If you ask a native of Africa, why he changes the plan of his house, his answer will be, that the rectangular house is easier to sub-divide and better in use—which is most probably true. When first the technique has been adopted, people in other parts of Africa will no doubt abandon the circular design and take up the rectangular.

171 342 But nevertheless, the variations in types of hut in Tanganyika are truly amazing; they range from e.g. the fine *ikaya* of the Banyakyusa,—to the rectangular *ilamba* with nearly flat, clay roof of the Vakimbu,—to the round bee-hives of the Batutsi, which may be built in no time on a frame-work of branches and covered with

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grass. This last-mentioned type is used by the Batutsi of western Tanganyika as temporary shelter on their perennial wanderings.

Why, then, do not all tribes build to the same design? There are 120 different tribes in Tanganyika alone, and were you to put the question to a member of one of these tribes, he would simply say, "We follow our custom!"—and this is actually the answer. It takes time to be influenced; people will stick to their old customs,—a fact which, as seen from an ethnographical point of view, is really an advantage. Changes should not come too quickly.

At about the time when Johnston wrote the above lines, the history of Johannesburg as a town had just begun. Now, that city is all grey stone colossi and streets criss-crossing at right angles. Even if the gold was behind all that, you never know when a similar fate may befall some part of Tanganyika. What cannot be called forth by the diamonds to the south of Lake Victoria?

Were the African village to disappear entirely,—it would truly be missed. It is interesting to follow the development which is under way in Tanganyika, and which cannot be halted,—to see how it will influence the charming villages and their inhabitants.

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